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ABSTRACT

A study of a primarily classroom-based language remediation program for three boys (in grades 1, 2, and 4) is reported in terms of the member roles and linguistic routines that were modified as the school year progressed. The student selection was based on the noticeable language difficulties they exhibited in classroom discourse and the effect these problems had on their social participation in class. The remediation program consisted of initial resource room meetings, twice weekly interactive in-classroom visits by the language specialist to support language efforts, and occasional pull-asides (individual conference meetings) in or near the classroom. Collaborative consultation with the teachers varied among the three classrooms. Issues concerning classroom organization and teacher collaboration are discussed. The importance of classroom-based language assessment and instruction is stressed, as is the need for shifting the primary responsibility for special language intervention from the special educator alone to a shared collaboration of teacher, child, and language specialist. (Contains 20 references.) (DB)

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CLASSROOM-BASED LANGUAGE REMEDIATION PROGRAMS: ROLES, ROUTINES, AND REFLECTIONS

Francine Falk-Ross, Ph.D.

Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association

36th Annual Convention, February 23, 1996

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CLASSROOM-BASED LANGUAGE REMEDIATION PROGRAMS
ROLES, ROUTINES, AND REFLECTIONS

Francine Falk-Ross

Abstract

This study of a primarily classroom-based language remediation program is examined in terms of the member roles and linguistic routines that were modified as the school year progressed. Issues concerning classroom organization and teacher collaboration are discussed as they affected the three children in the study.

CLASSROOM-BASED LANGUAGE REMEDIATION PROGRAMS: ROLES, ROUTINES, AND REFLECTIONS

Francine Falk-Ross, University of Illinois-Chicago

Purpose and Perspective

The purpose of this study was to reflect on the process and products of a year-long, primarily in-classroom language remediation program. The design of this study was a series of ethnographic descriptions of the classrooms and language experiences of three elementary-aged boys. The students, in grades one, two, and four of a suburban public school, were chosen based on the noticeable language difficulties they exhibited in classroom discourse and the effect these problems had on their social participation in class. The boys remediation program consisted of initial resource room meetings to describe the shift in remediation site, twice weekly interactive in-classroom visits to support language efforts, and occasional pull-aside (individual conference meetings) in or near the classroom to clarify/explain goals. Collaborative consultation with the teachers varied among the three classrooms (Falk-Ross, 1995).

The language perspective taken in this paper is framed by a socio-constructivist model of language learning and language use. From this view language is understood to be purposefully constructed through social interaction and derived from person meaning (Halliday, 1993). A significant characteristic of language is the shared contextual nature of discourse (Bloome, 1982). Significantly, speakers assume different roles within specific discourse routines, or events, which affect their interpretation of the interaction (Bruner, 1975; Duchan, Hewitt, Sonnenmeier, 1994). A discussion of classroom-based remediation programs and reflections emanating from this research study focus on the changing nature of the regular classroom as the year progressed, i.e., as new roles were assumed and as linguistic routines were scrutinized.

Classroom Dynamics

Roles of the Language Specialist

The significant issues that continually surfaced throughout this research study involved the changing nature of language each child used and the changing roles that each member of study assumed--including the three focal students, their peers, their classroom teachers, and myself--from week to week. For example, my role in the classroom changed with each month of the study, as did those of the children I studied and those of the teachers with whom I collaborated. These changes were part of a process that could not have been entirely conceptualized prior to its initiation even with more extensive planning. Since my major aim in classroom observations and remediation was to foster the competence of the children's language constructions in discourse, the nature of my remediation efforts continually changed as I helped the students and teachers adapt to my suggestions regarding their roles in classroom discourse. This required a higher-than-usual level of metalinguistic awareness on the part of each participant. Enabling each member to develop this awareness became a part of the study, as well.

As I have indicated, prior to beginning this study there had been a growing dissatisfaction on my part with the lack of transfer, or generalization, of new skills and strategies taught in the special education resource rooms into the everyday language routines in the regular classrooms. The process of role negotiation introduced forms of collaboration that had not previously been encountered (or confronted) because the responsibilities of the regular education teachers and students had traditionally been separated from those involved in the special education programs. Thus, the major problem was that the existing teacher-student relationship and language routines in these two general programs were so different. To bring remediation work into the classrooms would mean that the roles of the participants and the language strategies used by each would needed to be modified.

As the study began in September, the children were told that this year's language therapy would consist of mainly classroom visits to develop their verbal communication skills into more competent contributions. All were surprised to see me in the classroom and were apprehensive

about receiving help in this context. Children, in general, are sensitive to variation in the routines and their roles as the participants in daily activities. Rules concerning who may lead in conversations and who may sit at desk arrangements are set early in the school year by the teacher as she considers the individual needs of the children in the class. Deviations in these rules and routines often create trepidation for children. Mickey, Vincent, and Henry were no exceptions to these general feelings.

The first hurdle for the boys was having to explain my presence in the classroom to peers, which meant suggesting that they needed some help to express themselves. Mickey didn't explain my presence; he was used to receiving extra help and attention from teachers in his classroom. Vincent usually shrugged and stated that I was 'a friend,' although he didn't seem to believe this at first. Henry muttered quickly that we would be working on language together, which the other children commented to each other that this was a good idea, considering his disfluent language style.

The responses of their peers were also important to observe because Mickey, Vincent, and Henry would need their support in conversations. Most of the children in the classrooms needed a few weeks to adapt to the presence of a new adult in the classroom. As a member of the school staff, I was a familiar face to most of the students, but not a familiar member in the classroom. That is, my participation in classroom activities/routines didn't fit the description of a teacher leading the class, or of an aide assisting children as directed by the teacher, or of a parent doing odd jobs. My responsibilities in a particular classroom were clearly centered around the focal child, whether I was observing his use of language or helping him to facilitate his language in discourse. This prompted some children in each class to feel that my giving 'special help' to the children with language
difficulties provided them with an unfair advantage in the classroom. In other words, the other children wanted help as well.

In order to help all the students, including Mickey, Vincent, and Henry, to understand that I was not giving 'answers' but strategies for finding the appropriate answers, I agreed to provide

help or constructive feedback to any child or small group in the class during breaks in teaching routines on the days that I was present in their classroom. Later in the year, I overheard a few students helping peers by providing strategies rather than an exact answer, possibly following my model. The children were learning that the process of solving a problem is just as important as the answer, probably because the IRE format used in the classrooms fostered this idea that had escaped them earlier in the year. This was just as important a discovery for the children with language difficulties as for their peers. Having a language teacher/helper, as myself, in the room to support the efforts of those children who needed help became more natural, and all the children were less guarded, in general.

Each focal child's language (and role) changed in the classroom as he began to participate more often and more competently in classroom discourse than he had in the past year. Unlike learning a strategy in the resource room, practicing it in the resource room and, unfortunately, leaving it in the resource room, each child came to understand that he would be expected to slowly and confidently assume the responsibility and control over the strategies that he chose to use and incorporate into classroom conversations. The hardest parts of their new task were to trust my suggestions and in the classroom and to risk experiencing more frustration as they practiced new language strategies for the first time. At first they knew to follow my lead. Sooner than expected, they wanted to take the lead themselves. Lastly, they needed to apply these strategy lessons into everyday classroom language situations in which I was not present.

All three children experienced changes in their language competence in classroom discourse for the first time in several years of school. Their roles in the classroom changed from reluctant respondents to more active participants. Mickey, who needed prodding to enter discourse in the first few months of the school year, managed to assert himself (occasionally) in classroom discourse with competent comments, expand his language constructions using phrases, and to anticipate language opportunities by attending carefully to discourse. Vincent, whose language consisted of overuse of ambiguous pronouns and growling behavior, learned to self-monitor his word retrieval using visual cues and attempted longer phrases to construct his

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responses. Henry's self-conscious attitude about his language was replaced by enough periodic successes to encourage him to be more assertive in entering classroom discourse with appropriate, if not always fluent, language constructions. All the teachers noted these changes; in several cases, peer relationships changed, as well. Each of the boys seemed happier, or more confident, now that he finally 'fit in' better.

Routines in the Classroom

Language in the classroom is centered around educational tasks and discussions. Studies of classroom discourse reveal that special rules of language participation occur that must be mastered by students if they are to be successful in the verbal interactional exchanges in the classroom (Cazden, 1988; Gumperz, 1983; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Children with language difficulties are at a disadvantage if they cannot competently take turns at talk to express themselves and to convey their understanding of content material. To be valid and effective, language remediation strategies must address the important contextual nature of language learning. Classroom discourse, with its characteristic roles and routines, is difficult to duplicate solely through contrived activities in a resource setting.

Throughout this study, all the teachers practiced a particular format of verbal interaction, typical of most classroom language routines (Cazden, 1988), i.e., initiation by the teacher of a question or comment directed toward the class, response by a student, evaluation of the response by the teacher (referred to as IRE). I worked within that structure to develop competent communication strategies for the three boys. Teachers made some modifications within the IRE format, e.g., giving more time for answers, acknowledging "out-of-turn" contributions, and giving more cues, to accommodate the children's needs but they still engaged in pseudo-questions asking for the "correct" answer. The key to developing a program to fit the particular needs of students within the everyday routines used by the classroom teacher may be found through collaboration and communication among the participants.

The growing communicative competence that the boys experienced was specific to the classroom language routines set earlier in the year by the teachers and, less directly, the students.

In each of the three classrooms studied, strict IRE patterns of interaction dominated learning activities, allowing limited opportunities for students to control conversation or organize activities. Therefore, the language strategies that the three focal boys were beginning to master will be most useful in the next school years in helping them to competently participate when the classroom teacher adheres to IRE language routines in similar patterns.

I do not mean to imply that the new language strategies will not be useful within other patterns of language routines that may occur in the classroom, such as between students as they collaborate together on mutual projects or consult individually during peer review activities, and with teachers as they participate in, rather than direct, student interaction. As part of the remediation program, the children were helped to self-monitor their use of language strategies and to develop flexibility in application of them. I often struggled with balancing lessons on changing the students' language constructions and personal perspectives in discourse. I tried to move from direct instruction to indirect support. Hopefully, these children will generalize the strategies they learned when new language routines present themselves.

Results of Year-long Study

Changes in Children's Communicative Competence

The changes in quantity and quality of the children's language were not, and still are not, always even or successful; however, they did reflect attempts at more competent communication of the children's ideas and understanding and reflected appropriate discourse participation. The student began to feel more confident about themselvesevidenced by their decisions to respond more frequently and take the risks involved in opening themselves up to evaluation by the teacher.

Readiness for Teacher Cooperation

The teachers, as the students, were unaccustomed to having another educator in the classroom and to the additional conferencing that occurred between the students and myself in the classroom as they were teaching. Although some distraction was caused by the teacher-aides as they moved around the classroom or worked with an individual student, the aides received direct instructions from the teachers concerning the help they provided. The teachers were uncertain as

to what I was teaching the children and felt that they had little control over my comments as they taught, a situation that challenged their role as overseer in the classroom. We resolved this problem through informal collaborative discussions--the teachers remaining as the primary decision makers in their classrooms--but often alternated between who would lead and who would follow us in implementing new language strategies for the focal children.

One of the teachers' main roles in this research study was to learn more about the children's problems through classroom observation and occasional inservice meetings, and to make informed changes in the way they questioned and accepted the children's responses. This was difficult for them to do with classrooms of almost twenty-five students. The most consistent areas of concern perceived by the teachers centered around three issues: they needed additional information about the specific language problems that were causing difficulties for the children in their classes; they asked for modeling of effective teaching strategies to use in the classroom; and, they wanted extra planning time to organize strategies and adaptations. Since teachers wanted to do the best job possible, these problems translated into teachers' perceptions of extra stress and added expectations. Real or perceived, these feelings are reflected in teachers' evaluations of their own teaching performances and efficacy (Ringlaben & Price, 1981; Ross & Wax, 1993).

My role in the classroom was to make the children's and teachers' jobs in this study look easy while instructing new language strategies in discourse and occasional pull-aside meetings. The teachers' cooperation was an integral part of the successes the children would experience. Introducing goals for competent language and then modeling examples of applicable cues made the lessons appear more manageable for teachers and students alike. Simple but meaningful explanations for the specific problems with expressive language and possible solutions for supporting the students' efforts were frequent. Since the teachers' cooperation in this research study was voluntary, representing a new form of language instruction for special education students, they had to feel comfortable in their roles. Since the theories supporting situated learning are clear and applicable, my role as leader in bringing these strategies into the classroom was more easily accepted and transferred to the classroom teachers.

One of the many important components of a successful integrated language program is communication with the classroom teacher to insure carryover and generalization of newly learned strategies into the child's everyday classroom language routines. However, often children leave the language resource room with "improved strategies" and "successful experiences" in that isolated context to enter the school hallways or classrooms with few changes in their overall language use. How frustrating this is for both the language specialist and the classroom teacher. In order for a language remediation program to be effective, the cues and clues that are developed by the specialist and child must be used by all the child's teachers, forming a consistent pattern of language change. Classroom teachers, however, are not routinely accustomed to assessing and addressing specific language difficulties as they occur in the classroom. They need to be informed of helpful techniques and provided with suggestions for implementation of these techniques through a program of consultation with the language specialist.

Modifications in the form of the structure of their interactions in discourse and their expectations for the three focal students were attempted by each of the study's classroom teachers with some degree of success, which indeed led to more competent contributions to classroom discourse by these children. Examples were provided in this book to show these changes. Ongoing efforts were necessary to explain to the teachers new and updated ideas from theories of language use and learning strategies. These conversations with the teachers provided them with an expanded knowledge base to draw upon as they created their own adaptations of language routines for the children in their classrooms.

Efforts Toward Teacher Collaboration

The traditional view of consultation services follows the expert service model (Caplan, 1970). That is, one individual with expertise in an existing area of knowledge assists another in dealing with a specific problem as it occurs at the time and for generalization in future instances. In this model, the consultant is not typically involved in the implementation of the recommended course of action; rather, the advice is primarily diagnostic and prescriptive in nature (Brown,

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Wyne, Blackburn, & Powell, 1979). This model has limitations in its effectiveness due to a general lack in continuity of the services and an inequality in roles of the participants. For these reasons, as well as due to weakened credibility for 'in-house' staff members and required accountability for meetings and follow-up services, this model is not optimal for school-based professional consultants. It clearly did not prove highly successful in prior trials in the setting of the school chosen for this study.

A more effective model for the educational setting is one that includes ongoing collaboration among the professionals (Brown, Wyne, Blackburn, & Powell, 1979; Coufal, 1993; Pryzwansky, 1985). In this model, the suggestions for interventions by the consultee originate from team discussions and mutual decisions. Tharp and Wetzell (1969) refer to this team of client, consultant, and consultee as the "triadic relationship" typical of effective consultative models. In the cases of school-based problems, the team consists of the teacher, the specialist, and the child.

The focus of this second model is client-centered (Carkhuff, 1969; Rogers, 1951) and the goals should be mutually developed, based on shared participation, resources, and accountability, and built on trust, parity, and interdependence (Friend & Cook, 1990). In a recent research study of consultative methodology, Coufal (1993) refers to this process of negotiation as collaborative consultation to emphasize both the manner and process of interaction. Her studies stand almost alone in providing evidence of the advantages of using this process as a treatment for children with communicative disabilities. Collaborative consultation was introduced and attempted informally in each of the classrooms of the three focal children during this study.

Models of the consultation process vary in the list of steps that define the total program. There are usually at least four progressive stages: identification of a problem, formulation of alternative approaches, intervention, and conclusion of services. The nature of these stages, i.e., the specific details and solutions, are understandably dependent upon the context in which it applies and the involvement of the participants. The length of time devoted to each stage is also highly specific.

In the cases of the three children in this study, the goals for collaborative consultation were offshoots of those listed in each child's individual educational program, specifying remedial instruction for word retrieval difficulties. The language specialist and classroom teacher met informally at the request of either member and at scheduled times. This approach is consistent with Coufal's (1993) observations that collaborative consultation is a process that does not occur in a single setting or within traditional time constraints of an assigned "clinical hour." Instead, she notes, it is a holistic approach to ongoing discussions of assessment and treatment options. Conversations included comparisons of performance in the areas of school work and language using specific strategies for improvement set by the student and the language specialist, observations of situations that caused increased stress for the child, and social/emotional issues that were relevant. These strategies are useful and recommended for all students, but are especially important for teachers to be familiar with when helping children with individual language differences.

Change in the School

The most noticeable and deeply felt aspect of this research study was the process of change in many components of the school environment. The language of the focal children was the only anticipated goal for change, although accommodations to my in-classroom movements and the children's new skills were expected on a small scale. The surprise was in the nature of other changes that occurred simultaneously that were related to my work in the school. These changes included the school's transition toward new forms of classroom organization and assessment methods and the district's policy toward educating children with special needs and individual differences. For example, the study's focus on changes in the form of language instruction/ remediation/support, later reflected in the children's language, was both a response to the most recent return to viewing educational organization in more integrated units as well as an impetus to introduce and develop this perspective as it would benefit children with individual differences, in this case language difficulties. Each of these changes had an impact on the research

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study, as will be discussed in this section. Together, these changes created a complex and often stressed environment in the classrooms.

The first set of changes occurred as the research findings concerning the advantages of more integrated classroom organization and less standardized assessment techniques finally trickled into the school's practicing curriculum. These changes occurred slowly, following educational input from teachers discussions, in-service presentations, my own suggestions, and experiential successes. Collaborative work among teachers and special staff members was still not formally acknowledged or provided for in terms of time allotments, but individual teachers did discover and try out new applications of language and literacy teaching developments.

For example, classrooms that were originally organized at the beginning of the school year with one central teaching area consisting of individual rows of desks facing one central blackboard evolved first into pairs of desks facing the board and later into 4-desk groupings or tables around the room. Reference materials were more readily available in educational interest areas called 'centers.' These changes in set-up both created and reflected changes in classroom teaching-learning styles, e.g., encouraging peer conferencing and support, and introducing student-directed learning. Despite the emphasis on IRE format, teachers' questions and student's answers were more frequently developed together. For the children with expressive language problems, including word retrieval difficulties, answers that previously would have been provided in a very structured, often contrived, way could not begin to be negotiated with the help of another adult or student. My role, as the adult introducing these supportive language strategies, was more easily provided and less obviously noticed as I sat and moved with the children in their smaller groups. My intention, i.e., to transfer the responsibility for support to the classroom teacher, the student's peers, and the student himself, was more easily accomplished as the children and teacher watched my facilitation models in more varied contexts.

The changing nature of assessment methods in the school was also consistent with the adaptations I had originally requested of teachers for the three children with whom I was working. Standardized assessment instruments were used most often to evaluate students' progress in

reading, writing, and language development. Using these results to determine group/track placements imposed unfair restrictions on the judgements made concerning the focal children's true language and literacy skills. Questions derived from contrived textual material lacked the contextual cues the children needed to retrieve words quickly and appropriately. The use of less formal assessment strategies, such as portfolio development, classroom observation, and alternative choices in methods for completion of a task utilized by several teachers and myself allowed all children the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

Another set of changes that were concurrent with the research study involved the school district's decision to develop a policy toward inclusion of all children in regular classes. An investigative period had begun involving children having moderate-to-severe cognitive and/or physical impairments, limited English proficiency, and learning disabilities being placed in regular classrooms all day on a trial basis. These children were assigned special teacher aides to assist them in adapting to the classroom routines. The message was sent to classroom teachers that they would now be responsible, at least in part, for integrating these children into everyday classroom activities and for adapting the curriculum so that they could participate. This was a large responsibility for these selected teachers, but it set the stage for asking the teachers in the classrooms I was studying to collaborate.

However, this set of changes was a mixed blessing. They worked to my advantage in that adaptations for the children I was studying seemed rather simple compared to those for children with multiple handicaps. I was disadvantaged, however, in that the students I had chosen to help in the classroom did not have any teacher aides assigned to them as did the new inclusionary students. I was the helper but I was limited in the time I had available. Opportunities to consult and collaborate with the teachers were necessary to support their new responsibilities but difficult for each to arrange with the very busy schedules the teachers had. Stress from the anticipation of added tasks and relief from the realization that the new language strategies were helpful became alternating emotions during the school year. I had only anticipated positive reactions to the support services I would provide.

Discussion and Implications

The information provided in these chapters extends beyond the confines of this particular study of three children in three classrooms. It provides important information concerning the procedures, the problems, and the promise for integrating special education programs involving children with language difficulties into regular education classroom activities and discourse. It provides a glimpse into three separate but similar attempts to remediate children's language difficulties in a shared domain, i.e., the classroom, while recognizing the significant responsibilities and contributions of each of them members, i.e., the special education teacher, the regular education teacher, and the students. This inside view is useful in alerting all school personnel, including regular and special education staff members and senior administrators, concerning the need for more flexible programming and meaningful communication within our schools today. Although the case study methodology used for this research investigation affords a detailed look at only a selective portion of children with expressive language difficulties, it is instructive in supporting new perspectives toward education of children with special needs.

For example, the site of assessment and remediation need to match the context in which the language problems are observed so that the solutions generated can be directly useful for the student. Classroom-based language assessment and instruction must be considered a necessary part, if not the largest part, of remediation programs for children with language disorders and similar special needs. The legislative mandates stating the need for more integrated programming for children with special needs have been in place for over ten years. The educational principles and practical suggestions for implementing these programs have been the subject of countless workshops and inservice programs. Still, programs exist, as in the school in which this research study was based, without the necessary integration of special education and regular education strategies in the classroom.

A second example is the growing need for collaborative consultation opportunities between the special education specialist and regular education teachers for the purpose of developing the expertise of all educators. A collaborative consultation approach can close many

of the gaps in knowledge of language accommodation for regular education teachers and knowledge of curricular content for special education teachers to benefit all the children in the classroom. At a time when children with physical handicaps, cognitive impairments, and limited English proficiency are finally being included with their peers in regular classrooms, educators' teaching styles must include individual adaptations for children's special needs.

This last point, i.e., that regular classroom teachers need to absorb and share more of the responsibilities for teaching children with special education needs, has been an important and debated issue mostly since the passage of legislation supporting inclusionary education, such as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) which mandates that students be placed in the least restrictive environment for their education (see Marozas & May, 1988, for a more complete review) and opened classrooms to children with language difficulties who would have been excluded in the past. Once a child has qualified for special education services, a group-determined set of language goals are specified for integration into the regular education program, as set by the child's Individual Education Program (IEP). Besides the language specialist, the classroom teachers and aides are recently being listed as part-time implementers of these goals.

Thus, the prime responsibility for implementation of special language strategies is shifting from the special educator alone to a shared collaboration of teacher, child, and language specialist in order to set up an optimal learning environment for these and all children in the school. Providing the classroom teacher with helpful information for understanding the child's problem and with suggestions for making necessary modifications for enhancing the child's language empowers both the teacher with the knowledge and tools to help the child and the child with the supports and opportunities to participate in classroom discourse. How well these consultative programs function is determined by the attitudes of the participants and the model of the program.

More specifically, the language negotiation process in the classroom requires a sustained and increased level of metalinguistic awareness on the parts of the teachers and students in the classrooms during verbal exchanges. Students with language difficulties benefit from encouragement and reinforcement in their struggles and successes to verbally participate. The

teachers need modeling and support in their efforts to individualize conversational styles for the children. Consideration of these factors further define the collaborative process. One of the goals of collaboration is to help the teacher understand the problems she or he will be encountering and to suggest practical ways to approach these difficulties. Many teachers resent the extra effort that must be expended to accommodate their language and routines for special students because they have not been provided sufficient information to understand the nature of the problems or to feel in control of the situations in which difficulties become disruptive to discourse (Ross & Wax, 1993). The teacher's cooperation through consultative collaboration is an important component of a successful language support program and should be sought for, whenever possible.

Further education is also needed for teachers in the areas of classroom organization and management. Children working in groups, sharing and comparing new information, strengthens the learning of each member. Students actively sharing in their education, selecting and critiquing texts and topics, allows for meaningful learning (Pappas, 1995; Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992). The children in this study had less difficulty with language that they initiated and was of interest to them than with material selected for them or questions that seemed contrived. This is true of all children's language and literacy skills; information that children can connect to their own experiences and needs is the most valuable to them.

Possibly the vocabulary that is used to explain the orientation of educational programs must be modified before the programs are. The term 'special' as it is used in the schools has taken on an all-inclusive definition, i.e., any student who is not absolutely "average" is special. "Special" has come to mean 'different' with a questionable, possibly negative, connotation. Yet, changes in the characteristics and needs of the present population of school children have occurred at a fast rate in the past few years and promises to challenge the teachers and administrators of the future even more. There are fewer and fewer 'average' children in classes today. Rather than separating and segregating children with special needs and special backgrounds into special education classes, all children need to be educated together so that their strengths and difficulties can be acknowledged and supported. Then it could be assumed, rightfully, that all students are special

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individuals with differences to share, giving the definition of 'special' a more positive connotation. As I conducted this research study and observed the children's classrooms, I noticed that the 'special' teachers and students were those who could address differences in other students' language expression as part of the classroom culture, helping and supporting them more naturally in their everyday conversational routines.

Future research study is suggested in classrooms where teachers, as part of school-wide administrative policies, assume more collaborative roles in organizing daily activities and providing educational services for children. Of particular interest would be the decision-making processes that occur as children are identified as having language difficulties and the remediation programs that are developed to resolve these problems within the classroom. Within this setting, possibly language problems other than expressive constructions and word retrieval difficulties may be addressed primarily in the classroom.

Another interesting research study in classrooms in which the language routines were more varied than the traditional IRE patterns used in the classroom discourse described in the present study. Within a larger range of interactional discourse, there would be more opportunities to address different forms of language constructions for competent models and remediation programs. Following these children's progress in school and in other contexts would provide important information about the generalizability of the new language strategies developed in school settings.

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